

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5

1. A document management device having a document storage unit for storing a document, comprising:

10 a usage permission information request reception unit configured to receive a usage permission information request from a usage permission information requesting client, said usage permission information permitting usage of the document storage unit;

15 a usage permission information generation unit configured to generate the usage permission information in response to the received usage permission information request; and

20 a usage permission information transmission unit configured to transmit the usage permission information to the usage permission information requesting client.

25

2. The document management device as
claimed in claim 1, wherein

the usage permission information generation
unit generates the usage permission information and
5 identification information of the usage permission
information, and holds the usage permission information.

10

3. The document management device as
claimed in claim 2, wherein

the usage permission information
transmission unit transmits the identification
15 information to the usage permission information
requesting client as the usage permission information.

20

4. The document management device as
claimed in claim 2 or 3, wherein

the usage permission information includes
identification information of the document storage unit
25 and authority information of the usage permission

information.

5

5. The document management device as
claimed in claim 2 or 3, wherein

the usage permission information includes
identification information of the document storage unit
10 and effective period information of the usage
permission information.

15

6. The document management device as
claimed in claim 2 or 3, wherein

the usage permission information includes
identification information of the document storage unit
20 and information of a maximum number of connections with
the document management device.

25

7. The document management device as
claimed in claim 2 or 3, wherein

the usage permission information includes
identification information of the document storage unit
5 and information of a maximum number of operations of
document storage in the document storage unit.

10

8. The document management device as
claimed in claim 2 or 3, wherein

the usage permission information includes
identification information of the document storage unit
15 and information of a storage capacity in the document
storage unit.

20

9. The document management device as
claimed in claim 2 or 3, wherein

the usage permission information includes a
plurality of items of identification information of the
25 document storage units.

5 10. The document management device as
claimed in one of claims 1 to 9, further comprising:

 a usage request reception unit configured to
receive a usage request from a usage requesting client
for using the document storage unit; and

10 a usage unit configured to use the document
storage unit according to the usage permission
information.

15

 11. The document management device as
claimed in claim 10, wherein

 the usage request includes information on
20 the document and information on the document storage
unit.

25

12. The document management device as
claimed in claim 10 or 11, wherein

the usage unit stores the document in the
document storage unit according to the usage permission
5 information.

10 13. The document management device as
claimed in claim 12, further comprising:

a document identification information
appending unit configured to append document
identification information for identifying the stored
15 document to the usage permission information, said
document identification information being appended as
an editable data.

20

14. The document management device as
claimed in claim 12, further comprising:

a document identification information
25 transmission unit configured to transmit document

identification information for identifying the stored document to the usage requesting client.

5

15. The document management device as claimed in claim 12, further comprising:

a document usage permission information
10 transmission unit configured to transmit information for permitting usage of the stored document to the usage requesting client.

15

16. The document management device as claimed in one of claims 10 to 15, wherein

the usage unit includes a determination unit
20 that determines whether the document storage unit requested by the usage request is at a lower level than the document storage unit in the usage permission information generation unit.

25

17. The document management device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 16, further comprising:

5 a document list information request reception unit configured to receive a document list information request from a document list information requesting client for acquiring document list information of at least one document stored in the
10 document storage unit; and
 a document list information transmission unit configured to transmit the document list information to the document list information requesting client in response to the received document list
15 information request.

20 18. The document management device as claimed in claims 1 to 17, further comprising:

 a document content information request reception unit configured to receive a document content information request from a document content information
25 requesting client for acquiring information of contents

of the document stored in the document storage unit;
and

a document content information transmission
unit configured to transmit the document content
5 information to the document content information
requesting client in response to the received document
content information request.

10

19. The document management device as
claimed in claims 1 to 18, further comprising:

a connection permission information request
15 reception unit configured to receive a connection
permission information request from a connection
permission information requesting client for acquiring
connection permission information that includes the
usage permission information and permits connection
20 with the document management device;

a connection permission information
generation unit configured to generate the connection
permission information in response to the received
connection permission information request; and
25 a connection permission information

transmission unit configured to transmit the connection permission information to the connection permission information requesting client.

5

20. The document management device as claimed in claim 19, further comprising:

10 an identification information request reception unit configured to receive an identification information request, made by the connection permission information requesting client, for acquiring identification information of the document storage unit,
15 said identification information of the document storage unit including the connection permission information and the usage permission information; and

 an identification information transmission unit configured to transmit the identification
20 information to the connection permission information requesting client that requests the identification information in response to the received identification information request.

25

21. A method of a document management
device having a document storage unit for storing a
5 document, comprising the steps of:

receiving a usage permission information
request from a usage permission information requesting
client for acquiring usage permission information that
permits usage of the document storage unit;
10 generating the usage permission information
in response to the received usage permission
information request; and
transmitting the usage permission
information to the usage permission information
15 requesting client.

20 22. The method as claimed in claim 21,
further comprising the steps of:

receiving a usage request from a usage
requesting client for using the document storage unit;
and
25 using the document storage unit according to

the usage permission information.